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ABSTRACT

Selections from the last three basal reading series produced by the Houghton Mifflin Company were examined to determine what improvements were made. One of the fundamental changes occurring in the 1971 revision ("Readers") was the replacement of grade designations with numerical levels that provided a better match between student and materials. The 1979 revision ("Reading Series") switched from numerical to alphabetic levels, and also showed movement through preprimer levels instead of grouping all preprimers at one level. These 1971 and 1979 revisions reflected more realistic and equitable representation of minority groups, urban living, and a wider span of socioeconomic levels in their content than the 1966 "Reading for Meaning Series." More than half the 1966 selections were changed to add various literary styles, such as folk tales, jokes, biographies, poetry, and information selections. Interpretive and evaluative-creative questions were added to the predominantly literal types of questions proposed in the 1966 materials, thereby fostering critical and creative reading skills at early levels. More nonbasal words were included in the later revisions, though mastery of these words is not insisted upon. There was also a shift toward earlier instruction in reference and study skills, with application to content related materials. The 1979 revision made allowances for individual differences in ability by alternating instructional and reinforcing materials. (RL)

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AN EVALUATION OF THREE HOUGHTON MIFFLIN READING PROGRAMS FROM 1966-1979

by

Bette A. Schmitt

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INTRODUCTION

The most popular reading approach in the United States is the use of basal materials from one of the major publishers. Surveys have found the use of a basal reading series for reading instruction in 90 to 95 percent of the elementary classrooms throughout the country (Austin and Coleman, 1963). However, Dolores Durkin (1970) criticizes the unquestioning use of these basal reader manuals and workbooks which, as she noted from years of teacher observations, often caused teachers to spend time on unnecessary and sometimes erroneous instruction.

Since Houghton Mifflin is one of the most widely used basals, it is the professional responsibility of the publisher and authors of the reading program to develop reliable instructional materials. It is also necessary for a reading series to be sensitive to current trends and to present a balance between diverse and conflicting theories in the field of reading.

Since the turn of the century, the quality of research in reading has shown a steady increase, with the result that today reading instruction has been one of the most thoroughly researched areas in the field of education. This body of research has produced controversies in many areas of reading instruction. Elementary school teachers and reading specialists who are faced with the need to make complex instructional decisions appear to automatically discount the usefulness of research

literature and turn their attention instead to teacher's guides and curriculum guides for answers to their problems.

Until recently there has been limited application of research findings by instructional practitioners. Attempts to remedy this situation have produced an increase in the number of books that review and synthesize the research literature and draw implications for practice. Among the more recent publications are those whose primary considerations begin with questions posed by teachers, supervisors and administrators. An extensive review of the information gathered from reseaechers is then summarized and interpreted to relate directly to these immediate concerns and to provide the best answer currently possible.

Although research evidence alone cannot yet direct all aspects of reading instruction, there are many areas where it does offer sound direction for improving children's reading abilities. The Houghton Mifflin Company maintains to have based the development of the 1979 Edition of its reading series on the application of this research evidence.

When a school selects a certain series as the core of its instructional program, it is committing itself to the overall goals of that series. It is imperative that both the methods utilized within the series and the specific goals which are relevant to the learner's needs be considered before the selection of a new basal. The teachers who will be using the materials

should participate in the decision making process. By taking into account the overall characteristics of the learners, teachers will be more apt to use the basal as a guide to aid in individualizing instruction, rather than a regimentor of their activities.

The results of this study may provide data useful in the evaluation of this series by promoting an understanding of the changes which led to the formation of its most recent edition. The findings may also prove helpful in allowing for more effective use of these materials by eliminating any manual suggestions and/or workbook pages which may be incorrect or unnecessary.

The Problem and Hypotheses

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Series, a basal reading program published by The Houghton Mifflin Company, has revised its teachers' manuals and texts three times during the past two decades. The areas in which these changes occurred and their significance in light of existing trends form the basis for this study. Have improvements in the 1979 Edition been in agreement with the objectives and instructional procedures recommended by most experts in the field of reading? In order to seek evidence for these hypotheses, teachers' manuals and texts from 1966 to 1979 were compared with respect to changes and improvements made.

Definition of Terms

The following definition was used for this study.

Basal Reading Series: "An interrelated set of materials for teaching fundamental reading skills. A set requires a sequence of reading materials for the learners, graded in difficulty, and guides or manuals that provide directions on how to teach with these materials" (Harris 1972).

Limitations

1. The information and conclusions of this study are limited to the first three grades of the Houghton Mifflin publications.

2. The criteria have been subjectively chosen for comparison and analysis by the researcher.

3. The comparison of the objectives and procedures stated in the manual and recommendations by reading experts is the subjective evaluation of the researcher.

Reading achievement has always been the concern of educators but it was not until the publication of Why Johnny Can't Read by Rudolph Flesch that public concern was generated over reading achievement and instruction. This book initiated the debate over the most effective method for reading instruction. This controversy left book publishers confused about which methods and materials were of most value. Continued research and development over the past two decades have served to broaden and deepen the debate with contributions to the field of reading from other disciplines. Spache(1968) reports on research studies and clinical insights which have implications for reading from sociology, social psychology, child development, linguistics and psycholinguistics, educational psychology, optometry and opthalmology, and clinical psychology.

In the post-Sputnik era, a national concern over low reading achievement prompted harsh and severe criticism of the most popular materials for reading instruction at that time--the basal readers. Educators responded with an expansion of research efforts. Harris(1963) found increased attention being given to developing reading readiness programs and the effectiveness of their testing, development of vocabulary, word recognition techniques, reading for meaning, and reading for the gifted as well as help for the retarded reader.

In this review, the researcher will attempt to reveal the findings of the leading authorities in the areas of methods, comprehension, language, vocabulary and content of the stories in the period since 1960.

During the past two decades, substantial revisions in the basal series have been made. Two studies investigated these changes in depth. The first study by Harris(1972) listed the following changes between 1960 and 1970:

1. Emphasis on decoding in beginning reading
2. Shift in emphasis from literal comprehension toward critical and creative
3. Interest in behaviorally stated objectives
4. Richer vocabularies
5. Wide variation in the procedures used in teaching word identification skills
6. Critical and interpretive reading and study skills received increased attention
7. A trend toward a multi-ethnic and multicultural scope in the content of the stories
8. More non-fiction material in the intermediate grades
9. Additional or alternative skills practice for traditional workbook including visual and auditory supplements, and kinesthetic modality given increased emphasis at the readiness and beginning levels
10. Illustrations more varied
11. Levels rather than specific grades

Rodenborn and Washburn(1974) continued the investigation into the early 1970's. This second study made several additions to the previous list while also mentioning similar findings. The results are listed as follows:

1. General attractiveness including brightly colored pictures and illustrations

2. The content of the stories was one of great natural interest rather than an artifically contrived middle-class family.

3. Influence of linguistic consultants in that the language patterns used reflect a closer connection between the oral language patterns of the child

4. Annotated teachers' editions

5. Variety of satellite materials(games, supplementary readers)

6. Heavier emphasis on phonics instruction in the first grade

7. Some basals dropped the systematic instructional procedures of the DRA and others changed the sequence by putting phonics as the first step in the lesson.

8. The greatest change was in abandoning the controlled-vocabulary principle which required a slow introduction of words with much repetition.

Along with Flesch, probably the most influential work concerning the movement from traditional "look-say" to the phonics method was Chall's Learning to Read: The Great Debate. In this study, she summarized the research conducted on this question from 1912 to 1965 and concluded that learning the printed code for the spoken language leads to superior reading achievement that continues at least through the third grade. Bleismer and Yarborough(1965) studied ten reading programs and also concluded that an early emphasis on decoding produced better readers. Both studies did not neglect the importance of incorporating reading-for-meaning practice.

Agnew(1939) felt that the phonics approach gave children increased independence, a method for sound analysis and a system for unlocking new words. He also felt that this approach

would lead to success in spelling and improve the quality of oral reading.

In regard to objectives and instructional procedures relating to phonemic analysis, research by Mazurkiewicz reveals, "...teachers have an inadequate knowledge of terms used in reading and a low level of ability to apply them to words . . typically found in reading materials..." A low level of phonic knowledge was due in part to misinformation from materials that are used in instruction. Studies by Burmeister(1968) and Clymer (1963) demonstrate the utility of various phonic generalizations. These studies enable educators to decide which phonic generalizations actually hold true a high percentage of the time. They also show that some commonly accepted generalizations are inefficient for children to learn. A study by Hardy(1975) concerning the achievement of phonic word attack skills of third and fourth graders revealed that conscientious application of systematic instructional procedures incorporating research-validated learning principles was more effective than teaching the recommended procedures in basal readers.

In regard to phonics instruction and materials, Durkin (1977) felt that quality has not kept up with quantity. Because visual cues are a starting point for decoding, they should be featured both in statements of generalizations and in practice.

Too many materials require the child to be able to read in order to do the phonics.

From studies comparing instructional methods, such as the Bond and Dykstra study(1968), eclectic procedures were shown to be better than certain methods used in isolation. Mazurkiewicz (1975) pointed out that beginning readers need both sight vocabulary and phonics instruction to cope with the printed page. In order to develop independence in reading, it is necessary at the very beginning to teach the use of context and those letter-sound associations that will furnish the most reliable clues for students to use in decoding unknown words. According to Gates(1961), consonants together with context provide the greatest percentage of correct responses. Goodman(1965) has shown that primary grade children are dramatically superior in decoding words when these words are presented in context.

Although a great deal of research has been done on reading methods, Wittick(1968) points out that studies to determine the most effective learning sequences have not been forthcoming. Adult perceptions may differ from the child's difficulty or ease in learning.

The psycholinguistic approach to understanding the reading process and the acquisition of language has added new dimensions to the problem of selecting instructional materials. The most

prevalent view is that instruction should be based on the context of children's verbal communication. Lefevre(1965) pointed out that no one can get meaning from the printed page without taking account of the entire language pattern at the sentence level because these are the minimal meaning-bearing structures of written language. Goodman(1965) stated that the orientation toward meaning is intrinsic in and basic to the reading process. It isn't possible to break reading into code and meaning because the code has no existence and certainly no use apart from meaning.

The language found in the basal readers has been criticized for being stilted and unnatural. Strickland(1972) feels that pupil's language patterns are much more varied than the patterns found in basal readers. In research conducted by Glazer(1978), some instructional materials were found to increase in complexity as children's oral language increases. In some cases, a sequence which is similar to the development of the child's oral language is followed. Reading instruction should should no longer be approached in isolation from other language skills. Stauffer and Hammond(1969) revealed that a language arts approach incorporating the functional use of all the communication skills throughout the primary grades was more successful than using a basal reader approach alone. Artley(1966) felt that the addition of literature to the reading program would be of value

since the teaching of skills was only a means to an end. He advocated that the teacher read a wide variety of books to the students on topics related to the basal reader stories or to the content areas. In principle, the basal reader proponents accept the integration of the language arts, but in practice they only integrate listening, writing, and reading. Writing as part of learning to read is given little attention in the teacher's manuals past the beginning stages. The Bond and Dykstra study concluded that learning effectiveness was increased by the use of writing.

Ruddell(1965) found that reading comprehension is increased significantly when the printed language patterns closely resemble the natural oral language patterns of beginning readers. Tatham(1970) supports these findings and concludes that children would benefit if printed sentence patterns were controlled so as to be similar to children's oral patterns until they are able to deal with the more complex patterns. Goodman and Buck(1973) found that children who use non-standard dialects can learn to read standard English effectively if they can understand spoken standard English and if their dialects are not rejected by teachers.

Mueller(1972) stated that teachers asked more cognitive memory questions than any other kind, regardless of the level

of the group. She felt that the teachers' behavior was influenced by emphasis on facts found in many textbooks. An additional factor may be that a teacher's background and preparation discourages divergent thinking and rewards specific-response-oriented behavior. This same factor is carried through in the teacher's manual which contains a tremendous number of questions and directions. Following the detailed plans may take the child's attention away from the text rather than help him focus and concentrate on it.

Henderson and Shanker(1978) found that interpretive dramatics proved more effective for developing comprehension than basal reader workbooks.

Vocabulary load, including both the development and the assessment of words in a reading series, has been the subject of renewed interest in recent years. Rodenborn(1974) states that at present children are taught word analysis skills early and therefore certain "decodable words" are left for the children to sound out. Consequently there is a great increase in the number of words included at the first grade level accompanied by reduced repetition. Rodenborn compared 1960 and 1970 versions of basal series and found as few as 235 words introduced in the first grade materials of a 1960 series and as many as 675 in the 1970 edition of another series. It was also found that the new

basals lacked a commonality or basic core of vocabulary. Olson (1965) found quite diverse vocabularies among the different series he examined indicating that it would be exceedingly difficult for children to move from one series to another. Gates (1961) has shown that children near the end of third grade recognize almost as many words designated "fourth-grade words" as they do the words to which they have been introduced in their basal series. In the beginning stages of reading, some form of vocabulary control seems essential to avoid word difficulties while developing new skills. However, conventional listing and control of new words at grade four and above may be a waste of time in that they do not adequately reflect the readers' ability to decode new words.

Johns(1976) found that the two word lists from the 70's (The American Heritage Intermediate Corpus and the Kucera-Francis Corpus) accounted for a significantly greater proportion of words than the Dolch List in materials intended for both children and adults. He felt, however, that knowing some magic number of words was not a sufficient condition to become an effective reader.

According to Eberwein(1979), the basic idea behind readability is that of matching the reading level of the student with the reading level of the material. Data revealed a relatively large variation in readability levels of the reading textbooks. Bradley(1978) found no systematic pattern of intrabook reada-

bility variation in the basal readers he investigated.

While the readability level of the basals have received considerable attention, the difficulty level of the workbooks have been ignored. The workbooks contain supplemental exercises to strengthen and extend the skill in the readers and are normally used independently. Fitzgerald(1979) found that the large variation of readability levels in these workbooks places a new obligation on teachers to be aware of the difficulty level of each lesson before allowing students to proceed with daily assignments.

Wilson(1976) compared the vocabulary used in written directions to the controlled vocabulary in the readers. He concluded that there were more extra words in written directional statements of their worksheets. Since both the workbooks and worksheets are assigned independently, the new words may inhibit a pupil's achievement of the lesson's objective.

Innovations in recent years has been to bring about more vital, realistic and imaginative content in the readers. Concerning data reviewed on the change in the content of basal reader stories, Steuer and Steddom(1979) revealed that the content has changed over the past two decades according to settings, characters, family compositions, parental roles and moral lessons emphasized. Recent studies have been concerned with the treatment

of women and minority groups in texts. A study by Graebner(1972) found that women seldom appeared in a variety of roles, and that they served as important characters less often than men, and tended to be stereotyped and shown as dependent. Studies in the late 60's were critical of the basal reader selections for their failure to show the lives of children and their families in realistic settings and activities. Bloom(1968) found urban settings occurred in stories only 1% of the time whereas population distribution studies showed that 31% of the population resided in the city.

Schwartz and Allington(1977) compared American and West German texts and found updated story content in both in which women were depicted in employment outside the home and taking a more active role in family situations. There was an introduction of poetry, plays, riddles and written directions in addition to narrative prose. According to Cheek(1979) basal reader stories and illustrations no longer consistently depict happy events nor do they emphasize only the positive aspects of life. A greater proportion of the pictures actually portrayed some type of conflict while 73% of the stories were realistic for current society. Current research has shown significant increases in the portrayal of blacks and women in basal readers. However, Marten and Matlin(1976) found the more recent studies

did not show substantial improvement in the male dominated stories. The nature of the activities of the females has not changed substantially in recent years. Certain traits are still reserved for males.

The selections in a basal reading program not only provide the means for developing basic reading skills but also for encouraging growth in the affective domain. It is through the selections that one would hope to develop the child's appreciation of literature and to help the child form the lifetime habit of reading for enjoyment. A proper choice should also seek to provide the child with a positive self-image and to help the child to have a respect and appreciation for the mahy cultures within our country.

While the pictures within the texts may be useful in motivating the child or to illustrate something unknown to him, many studies have shown that they may be distracting. Samuels (1967) feels that pictures may be used as prompts when the reader cannot read a word in the text, but pictures may miscue and may divert attention from printed words. Results of his study showed that poor readers with no pictures present learned more words. Pictures were a distracting stimuli. Among better readers, the difference was not significant. Recent experimental evidence by Weintraub(1967) supports these findings. He concludes

that if attention is constantly directed to pictures, the beginner may be distracted from the words and get a completely erroneous idea of what reading is all about.

Basal readers have been labeled according to grades for many years. There is now a trend toward pacing pupils at their own rate through non-graded programs. Barr(1974) found that children learn more effectively when placed in small groups in which the pace of reading instruction is matched to the instructional level of the children in each group.

Evidence supports the use of diagnostic testing to pinpoint each child's specific skill needs. Klosterman(1970) reported that low socio-economic children made significant progress in reading achievement, whether they were taught individually or in small groups, when the results of diagnostic tests were used as a basis for teaching. Diagnosing children who had difficulties making the expected gains in reading achievement led to a greater variety of instructional materials. The need to bring every child up to a level of standard performance led to the preparation of highly detailed teacher's manuals and placed increased importance on instructional materials. In order to deal with individual differences, manuals should be providing some useful information on the kinds of errors children may be expected to make and suggestions on how to correct them.

According to the Bond and Dykstra study, reading achievement was not demonstrated to be a single competency. McCullough (1968) feels that what is needed is a balance of the many components that comprise the total reading process. The conclusions of the First Grade Studies and many other researchers were that children learn to read equally well by all methods and that there is no one method to teach all children to read. The wide differences found within most of the individual approaches to teaching reading point out the importance of elements of teacher and learner situation characteristics rather than on methods and materials. These studies should alert those choosing materials that reading achievement varies greatly even when the same materials are being used. There may be more to be gained by studying <u>how</u> instructional materials are used than by merely determining <u>which</u> materials are used. In this researcher's opinion, there is a need to know more about how to match learner characteristics and learning styles to teacher characteristics and the most effective combination of approaches. Singer(1970) feels that teachers should have a variety of methods and techniques in their repertoire so that they would be more able and more likely to adapt teaching methods and modes to the instructional needs of their pupils.

Three different Houghton Mifflin basal reading series of the first three primary grades were examined. Twenty-seven readers and twenty-seven Teachers' Guides were selected for this study. An examination of the Philosophy, Readiness for Reading, Phonics, Comprehension, and Vocabulary of this series was made to meet the purpose of this study.

Table 1 depicts the mentioned need for this study and, following, the extent of the examination is noted.

Table 1

Material Examined in Each Series

Series	Level
Reading for Meaning Series (1966)	
Tip	PP1
Tip and Mitten	PP2
The Big Show	PP3
Jack and Janet	P
Up and Away	1
Come Along	21
On We Go	22
Looking Ahead	31
Climbing Higher	32

Readers (1971)	Level
Tigers	3A
Lions	3B
Dinosaurs	3C
Rainbows	4
Signposts	5
Secrets	6
Rewards	7
Panorama	8
Fiesta	9

Reading Series (1979)	Level
Rockets	B
Surprises	C
Footprints	D
Honeycomb	E
Cloverleaf	F
Sunburst	G
Tapestry	H
Windchimes	I
Passports	J

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1. An analysis of the authors' philosophy concerning the reading process was made to determine the goals and objectives

which formed the basis for the content, methods and instructional strategies utilized.

2. In terms of readiness skills, comparisons were made on the procedures utilized in the development of sight vocabulary and decoding instruction.

3. An analysis of phonic instructional procedure and content was made to determine differences in methods, emphasis on word recognition, phonemic and structural elements taught and the use of phonics generalizations.

4. Comprehension activities on the literal, interpretive, evaluative and creative levels were also analyzed.

5. A difference in the vocabulary loads of the three series was derived from the total word count of the basal readers.

6. Changes in the content of the stories were examined.

7. A comparison of the overall physical features in design, graphics, and illustrations was also made.

8. Tables depicting the data obtained were analyzed to determine the validity of the first hypothesis.

9. Comparisons of the objectives and instructional strategies was made with the data collected from research-oriented periodicals such as the Reading Research Quarterly, Journal of Reading, and Reading World, in addition to empirical data reported in EPIE on the use of the last two editions of the Reading Series.

Philosophy

The Houghton Mifflin Reading for Meaning Series (1966) was developed under the guidance of Paul McKee. Both the Houghton Mifflin Readers (1971, 1974) and the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series(1976, 1979) were developed by senior author William Durr and his associates. Both senior authors have had extensive experience in education at both the elementary and university levels. This study is based on the first nine books of each series.

The Houghton Mifflin basal materials have changed in format, content, vocabulary, and phonics emphasis as they absorb the contributions from other disciplines to the teaching of reading. The application of new information about teaching and learning gained from these fields led to substantial revisions and an increase in an even greater variety of new materials. In addition, publishers not only incorporated research findings into these revisions but also the needs and concerns of teachers as well.

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Series is a comprehensive, highly structured linguistically-oriented program consisting of early letter-sound associations and the sentence approach to beginning reading. Over the past two decades, the two major goals of the program which form the basis for the methods and content have not changed. These goals are: early independence

in reading, and a lively and ever-widening interest in reading.

At the primary level, context and consonant letter-sound associations in left-to-right sequence are taught as the key to rapid and accurate identification of printed words which are already in the reader's listening-speaking vocabulary. This decoding strategy will lead to skill and independence in reading materials written in vocabulary and sentence patterns that they would understand in spoken form. All letter-sound associations are taught using the analytic approach. The vowel-sound associations are comparatively unreliable and generally unnecessary clues to the identity of a strange printed word. Too much emphasis on them in the early stages tend to encourage pupils to "sound-out" strange words instead of efficiently using a minimum of reliable clues to read for meaning. The authors' view of beginning reading and mature reading is the same--that of obtaining meaning. By using context to unlock new words, the beginning reader is automatically reading for and demanding meaning. The flow of familiar language ensures that syntactic clues will be utilized in the process of seeking meaning.

From the third grade on, when children begin to meet words not in their listening-speaking vocabularies, they are taught the use of dictionary skills, context clues, and the meanings of affixes as additional means of building "recognition vocabularies".

The fields of linguistics and psycholinguistics have influenced the program's basic philosophy concerning the reading process. Linguists involved in reading research feel that the child "expects" the spoken language to make sense and since the child is taught that printed language represents familiar spoken language, printed words should also be expected to make sense. Linguists point out that words are integral parts of a natural flow of language rather than combinations of sounds that are uttered in isolation. The relationships between words are continually stressed as children meet all new words in sentences--sentences whose patterns are carefully controlled to match regular speech patterns in early reading. Intonation and its importance in meaning is stressed starting with the first preprimer.

The authors adher to the psycholinguistic view that reading is the counterpart of listening. While the input is different, the processes are much the same and the goal is the same--that of comprehension. A reader draws upon his knowledge of the grammar of language as much as he does on his experiential background as he reads. Anticipation of the next word is an important habit to develop in young readers. Through the early mastery of the decoding stratey and instant recognition of high frequency words, more natural language can be used from the preprimers on. Contractions, inflected forms, and compound words are taught earlier to make the natural flow of language

possible. The focus of instruction is on building comprehension strategies rather than on word attack skills per se. This is accomplished by the goal of minimum cue-based reading and by direct teaching of context cues. New evaluative materials now include oral tests for the purpose of miscue analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses.

The guiding principles upon which the series was designed and which have remained unchanged are: the sequential arrangement of skill instruction and the content used to develop these skills are appropriate in difficult and interest to the instructional level intended; inclusion of the three aspects of teaching, practice, and application; provision for a variety of instruction and practice to suit the needs of different students and teachers; clearness and precision in all directions provided for the use of both teachers and students.

Chall(1967) criticized basal reading systems for not incorporating the findings of research in their methodology. The authors of the Houghton Mifflin reading program have presented research upon which the program was based and which contributed to the last two revisions. This research can be found in a separate publication of the latest revision entitles, "Research and the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series". A similar publication was issued with the 1971 edition. Since research on the approaches and sequence of skills for beginning reading

is far from definitive, considerable interpretations may exist. As a result, it is possible that findings which were compatible with their philosophy and goals were selectively chosen.

As noted in Table 2, a fundamental change in the Houghton Mifflin Readers has been the switch from book descriptions referring to grades to descriptions that use the term "level". The rationale behind the shift to level markings, at least in theory, was to promote a better match between the materials and the individual child's ability level. The child is allowed to progress according to his own power rather than the pace established for the group. Other reasons for the change to levels were that many kindergartens began teaching reading and also some school systems were employing nongraded organizations.

Each reader contains an anthology of selections considered for use as a vehicle for the development of skills directed in the Teacher's Guide. The primary program consists of basic skills(word attack, listening, and specific comprehension skills) the children need to know to be able to read anything understood in spoken form. The intermediate program moves from an emphasis on word-attack skills to higher-level comprehension, reading-study, and literary appreciation skills.

The selections in the 1971 and 1979 editions include a greater variety of literary styles than the 1966 edition. These include more imaginary stories, plays, poems, jokes and riddles,

Table 2

The title of readers for each level examined in Reading for Meaning Series, Readers, and Reading Series

Reading for Meaning Series		Readers		Reading Series	
Level	Title	Level	Title	Level	Title
PP1	Tip	3A	Tigers	B	Rockets
PP2	Tip and Mitten	3B	Lions	C	Surprises
PP3	The Big Show	3C	Dinosaurs	D	Footprints
P	Jack and Janet	4	Rainbows	E	Honeycomb
1	Up and Away	5	Signposts	F	Cloverleaf
21	Come Along	6	Secrets	G	Sunburst
22	On We Go	7	Rewards	H	Tapestry
31	Looking Ahead	8	Panorama	I	Windchimes
32	Climbing Higher	9	Fiesta	J	Passports

folk tales, and informative articles. The literary quality of the selections are based on reviews of books for young children and surveys in school and public libraries of specific books and subjects that were of greatest interest to children.

The authors recommend integrating reading instruction into a total language arts program involving expressive and receptive skills. Each Teacher's Guide of the last two revisions provides suggestions for listening, speaking, and writing activities. These guides also contain introductory information at the beginning of each book to familiarize the teachers with the goals and objectives of the program. This same information is located throughout the Teacher's Guides of the 1966 edition in sections entitles, "Author's Notes".

More pressure has been placed on schools to define their goals and objectives and to specify the instructional objectives which must be achieved in order to reach those goals. The addition of the Scope and Sequence Chart of Skills to the Teacher's Guides in the latest revision provides the major category, component skills, and specific skills in a hierarchical arrangement. This information in code form is included at the beginning of each instructional unit so that the teacher is aware of the specific skills for which instruction, practice, and assessment are provided. The practice book also includes goal statements to set purposes for the exercises to inform children of how the

work on each page will improve their reading ability. Some pages in the practice book of the latest revision require coloring ovals which provides suitable practice in the standardized test format.

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Series includes a carefully sequenced series of reference and study skills at the primary level that begins with classifying activities and introducing alphabetical order, dictionary skills, and topics.

Vocabulary is based on frequency rather than phonemic regularity. A basal recognition vocabulary of extremely high frequency words allows the pupil to recognize most if not all of the words in the sentence except the one to be decoded.

The authors feel that the basal series is only part of the total reading program. They suggest wider reading as an equally important aspect of the program for extensive reading allows for application and an awareness of the benefits of skill instruction.

Content and Format

In the 1960's, one of the most persistent and vocal criticisms reflected the civil rights movement of minority groups. The specific charge directed at beginning materials was that stories and illustrations singles out the white, middle-class child living in suburbia. The Houghton Mifflin publishers responded with new materials in which the illustrations and content reflected a greater ethnic, environmental, and vocational balance. Subsequent criticisms reflected the women's liberation movement where questions were raised about the passive unrealistic roles assigned to girls and women in trade books as well as basal readers.

In the two revisions during the decade of the 1970's, serious attention was given to the selection of materials that represented women, men, girls, and boys of all racial and ethnic groups in an accurate and positive way. The authors claim to provide high-quality literature that avoids sex-role, racial and ethnic stereotyping and exposes children to many kinds of people in many kinds of roles.

Other criteria used in evaluation of selections included an appropriate balance between urban, suburban, and rural settings, and among major areas of children's interests--sports, animals, humor, science, and mystery. Adapted children's classics are included with changes in vocabulary and sentence patterns.

The contents of the readers is quite varied. Fifty to eighty percent of the contents of the Reading Series is new including plays, realistic stories, fanciful selections, photo essays, informational articles, and biographies. The greater variety of factual materials relate to the content areas.

Instilling moral values through the appropriate story selection seemed to receive greater emphasis in the 1966 edition. The selections were chosen for their intrinsic value to illustrate high ideals and strong character. The stories were to serve as convincing models of acceptable behavior, perserverance, and the standards of good citizenship. The Readers(1971) stories were chosen to illustrate our multicultural heritage and the need for all people of varied ethnic origins to understand and appreciate one another's contributions, viewpoints, and styles of life. The concern was not in judging behavior as right or wrong but with a greater understanding of the contributing causes. Selections of the Reading Series (1979) were screened to insure a reasonable representation of the sexes and of the various ethnic groups. A major emphasis is on variety, quality, and strong interest appeal for the children who are likely to read them. There appears to be a move away from stories that teach a lesson to a greater concern for interesting subject matter and appeal to the children who will be reading them. These selections were chosen on the basis of reports from children's

librarians of those titles having the greatest circulation, reports from classroom teachers and children's literature specialists, and by tryouts in classrooms.

A criticism of many basal stories is that they are too short so that the child is never allowed to read continuous discourse. Selections in the Houghton Mifflin reading materials are lengthy, usually whole stories of literary merit. Longer stories are necessary to develop a plot, build suspense, and provide for a satisfactory conclusion. However, if only parts of the story are read at a time and eventually completed over an extended period of time, it may be difficult for children and teacher to keep up the suspense. None of the editions allow the child to take the book home. Since each story has a strong element of suspence, the pupils will be eager to find out what happens next. Collecting books keeps students from reading ahead, so that high interest level can be maintained. Unfortunately, this practice may remove the satisfaction of reading a familiar story to the child's parents and also the repetition of the high frequency words needed by many children.

The titles of the readers in Table 2 gives an indication of their content. In the Reading for Meaning Series, the stories deal with the lives of young children at home, in school, and in the community. Units deal with home, circus, picnics, animals, and the post office. Intermediate grades deal with other times

and places, informational articles and broader literary styles. From this family and community centered environment at the primary grades, the Reading Series stories take the child beyond his own familiar surroundings to experiences unlike his own and offer the kind of variety previously contained in the intermediate grades of the Reading for Meaning Series.

Basal readers are changing with the times. Evidence of changes in the direction of greater balance are evident in the areas stated. In the latest revision, there have been more changes in the role of women than of men. Most characters still seem to be representative of middle-class backgrounds.

Changes in the illustrations from the 1966 edition to the 1979 edition reflect a greater use of color and variety of art techniques. There is no one pattern to the format of the recent books, each one is a collection of different art styles including innovations in textbook art such as montages and 3-D effects. The illustrations are brightly colored and varied. However, some of the very ornate and modern illustrations may be hard to identify or may distract a child from concentrating on the text. Pictures decrease in number in each successive reader which corresponds to trade books of comparable levels. In the Houghton Mifflin reading program, the illustrations are used for motivation in order to attract a child to want to read the story, assist in word identification, and help the child

identify the speaker. However, this constant shift in attention between text and pictures may interrupt the natural flow of language and may produce an over-reliance on the pictures to extract meaning rather than the text itself.

The quality of the paper has improved over the Reading for Meaning Series. Several different typefaces lend variety and are designed to prepare the child for the many different typefaces in other reading materials. The typeface in all the editions has been clear and appropriately spaced for each level. Some of the print in the Reading Series covered parts of the illustrations making it difficult to read, especially if a child has a figure-ground problem.

The most carefully designed instructional program will succeed only to the extent that it is able to win and keep children's attention. Therefore, strong interest appeal is given primary consideration.

The accompanying Table 3 illustrates the similarity between the Readers and the Reading Series in the prerequisite readiness skills for beginning reading. Both Level 1 and Ready Steps were developed to give children lacking in language and conceptual background additional training in these areas. These skills are particularly important aspects of the Reading Series program since beginning reading is based on the child's oral language competence and an appropriate ability to understand the vocabulary and syntax.

Getting Ready to Read (all editions) provides the foundation of the prerequisite skills of letter names, visual and auditory discrimination for the preprimers. The latest edition also includes work with terminology necessary for beginning discussions of letter-sound associations such as :beginning letter" and "beginning sound" since children come to school hearing a string of words as an uninterrupted flow of meaningful thought, not as distinct and separate words or sounds.

Children are taught the decoding strategy in a systematic procedure beginning with oral context and extending to printed context with letter-sound associations. The introduction of rebus reading in Level A enables children to read fluently. Since rebuses replace nouns, their use enables children to have

Table 3

Readiness Activities

Reading for Meaning Series	Readers	Reading Series
Pre-reading: Learning Letter Sounds 1. Auditory discrimination Getting Ready to Read 1. letter names 2. visual discrimination of letter forms 3. Auditory discrimination 4. letter-sound associations for 18 consonants and 4 speech consonants (ch, sh, th, wh) 5. use of spoken context alone to supply clues to missing words	Level 1: Getting a Head Start 1. extend conceptual background 2. school vocabulary 3. facility with types of sentence patterns 4. auditory discrimination 5. using sense of oral context to think of missing word 6. use of beginning sounds to identify a word that would make sense in context 7. foster growth in oral language Level 2: Getting Ready to Read 1. names of letters 2. visual discrimination 3. meaning of "beginning sound" 4. letter-sound associations for 18 consonants and 4 digraphs 5. instant recognition of 15 high-frequency words 6. oral context together with letter-sound associations	Readiness: Ready Steps 1. auditory discrimination 2. understanding instructional language 3. following oral directions 4. listening comprehension 5. sequencing 6. oral language development 7. general vocabulary 8. categorizing 9. using oral context 10. letterform discrimination Level A: Getting Ready to Read 1. letter names 2. visual discrimination 3. meaning of "Beginning letter and sound" 4. letter-sound association for 18 consonants and 4 digraphs 5. use of letter-sound associations combined with sense of oral context 6. instant recognition of 16 high-frequency words

many contacts with the high frequency function words so that they may become part of the child's instant recognition vocabulary in the initial stages of learning to read. Even at this stage, except for proper names, the teacher never tells the child what the words are. She assists in the use of the letter-sound and syntactic clues to identify even the high-frequency words. There is continual emphasis throughout the primary levels on using the decoding strategy to recognize familiar words which are strange only in the printed form. The introduction of high-frequency words at the pre-reading level, along with the awareness of what is happening in the pictures, provides the context clues needed so that from the beginning the child is reading in a natural manner identifying each new word as it appears in an ongoing story.

Changes in the latest revision include more rebus reading, high-frequency words introduced earlier, and words are decoded in printed context before leaving Getting Ready to Read. In addition, perhaps due to the greater equality of representation in children's reading materials among the sexes, the word "she" has been added to the list of high-frequency words which now total 16.

Instant recognition of the high-frequency words allows students to enter the first preprimer at an independent level by knowing 60% of the vocabulary. By the end of the first pre-

primer, these words have been practiced an average of 53 times each. This repetition appears to be adequate based on research studies which found that average and below average students required 40-60 repetitions for rapid identification. Teaching these high-frequency words at the readiness stage permitted the authors to use language in preprimers that is far less artificial than that of earlier preprimers. The stories even at the preprimer level are lengthy in order to develop a plot with either a problem to be solved or a humorous incident or both. Each story is divided into episodes. The authors believe that the increased length gives vitality to the childs's early experiences.

The use of a special key-picture approach helps the pupil to learn the consonant letter-sound associations. The shape of the letter is super-imposed on a pictured object which has a name that begins with the sound for which the letter stands.

A greater awareness of the benefits of adding the kinesthetic sense may have contributed to the publishers new set of auxillary materials entitled, "Writing Helps" which give all students practice in letter formation and word association and recognition. Teacher's instructions in the Reading for Meaning Series advised the use of kinesthetics only for those severe cases who might benefit from copying and writing.

In the Reading for Meaning Series, the printed text on each page in the preprimers is limited strictly to the words that are spoken by the story characters. Thus, the text is truly "printed talk". The picture of the speaker begins each line thus eliminating the need for repetition of phrases such as, "Jack said". Teachers are urged to impress on the child the importance of converting the printed talk into the natural speech with which he is familiar. Importance is placed on natural expression that the story character probably used in the situation presented by the pictures.

Use of natural language patters at even the earliest levels was tightly controlled to ensure that children will be able to tap their substantial oral language resources.

Chall's study(1967) indicated a significant correlation between letter-sound association and reading achievement in the early stages of reading. Chall pointed to the need for a systematic method of introducing decoding skills to children. Both revisions of the Houghton Mifflin basal readers examined placed greater emphasis on earlier and more instruction in phonics.

Children develop early independence in decoding based on the strategy of using consonant letter-sound associations in a left to right order together with context. Since the decoding strategy works well with only knowledge of consonant sounds, the direct teaching of long and short vowels is delayed until Grade 2 in the Reading for Meaning Series and Levels 5-F corresponding to the traditional Grade 1 in the Readers and Reading Series as illustrated on Table 4.

Instruction in letter-sound associations occurs only after pupils have had at least one word in their basal vocabulary that contains the letter(s). Both consonant and vowel sound associations are taught via the inductive approach based on one or more examples from known vocabulary. Few phonics rules are learned. The emphasis is put on identifying and applying learned letter-sound associations to new words. The goals is not to "sound out" words but to identify them as wholes based on the sense of the context. At later levels, when children

Table 4

Listing of phonemic elements taught in Reading for Meaning, Readers, and Reading Series, Preprimers through Grade 2

Reading for Meaning Series Levels PP[1]-2[2]	Readers Levels 3A-7	Reading Series Levels B-H
18 single consonants silent e	18 single consonants	18 consonants ch,sh,th,wh
ch, sh, th(soft and hard)	ch,sh,th,wh	consonant z c /s/
wh	st,tr,cr,fr,pl,sc,sm	ck
pl,tr,sl,fr soft c	ck,mp /ī/ my	tr,st,pl,sm,fl,sc,fr,pr,gr
nd,ld	silent e /ā/ day	ay,aw,ew,ow,oo ai,oy,oi
bl,cr,fl,sk,st,str	ee oo,ow	g, dge, ge /j/ nk
mp,nk,nt,ng Vowel helper	c/s/ oi,oy	consonant x
w and y	consonant z ai,oa	qu,squ,thr,sl,cl,str oa,ee
	vowel helper w and y	
consonant z	sk,sl,tr,str,gr,pr	dr,sn,bl,sp,spr,gl
soft g ee	dge /j/ ea	
br,cl,gr,pr,sl,thr	consonant q oo	ow
consonant x oo	gh /h/ wh /h/ s /z/	
silent b,t schwa sound	bl,br,thr,fl qu /kw/	direct teaching of long and
gh /f/	ph /f/	short vowels
ph /f/	direct teaching of	
	long and short vowels	
dr,gl,spr,sc,sm,sn,tw	cl,dr,scr,sn,squ,sw,tw	tw, sw
au,aw,ow(cow),ow(snow),ie,ue	gl	s /z/, /sh/, /zh/
ui,oi,oy	spl,spr,thr gh /f/	aw,ar,ea,ie
ai,ay,ea(eat),ea(head)	mb /m/ kn /n/ s /sh/	variant sounds of u,a,o
silent u after g	eigh ie,oi,ow,au,ou,ew	ou,ir,ur,er
ge /j/	ough,augh	
Long and short vowels introduced	or,ar,ir,ur,er	

must decode words unfamiliar in spoken form, instruction in context clues and dictionary skills is given.

Children are given the opportunity to arrive at generalizations concerning vowel sounds inductively before direct teaching of these sounds. At Level 3-E, children are taught that each of the vowels can represent different sounds in different words, thus fostering a set for diversity at an early stage. Pupils develop generalizations for the most common sound associations for the single vowels and many vowel combinations through frequent exercises on the most useful phonograms as listed in Table 5. At Level 5-F, there is direct teaching of the short and long vowel-sound associations for all of the single vowels, with direct teaching of the more irregular vowel combinations reserved for Level 6-G. The teacher does not isolate vowel sounds in the two revisions examined. A teacher is only permitted to tell a word to a beginner reading orally if the word begins with a vowel sound. In the Reading for Meaning Series, long vowel sounds were isolated for practice perhaps since there is minimum distortion involved.

Vowel sound associations are only needed when decoding words in lists or when the context is weak in that more than one word with the same consonant sound in like sequence would make good sense. The authors claim that if vowel sounds are introduced too early, their knowledge would lead pupils in the

Table 5

The structural analysis taught in the Reading for Meaning Series, Readers, and the Reading Series by completion of Grade One Level

Reading for Meaning Series	Readers	Reading Series
Common endings	Common contractions	Contractions
Verb forms	I'll	
-s	can!t	Common endings
-ing		-ing
-ed (/t/, /d/, /əd/)	Common endings	-ed
	-s	-er
Plural forms of nouns	-ing	-est
-s	-est	
-es	-er	Plural noun forms
	-ed (/t/, /d/, /əd/)	-s
Compound words		-es
	Compound words	
Prefixes		Compound words
a-	Common syllables	
be-	ful	Common syllables
	un	ful ly
	en	un y
	ly	a ness
		en
	Phonograms	
	an ake ine	Phonograms
	and ick old	an ack ame
	at ook ound	at ell ock
	en ad ast	et en ide
	in un ell	op in ight
	ot all est	ay ot est
	et	ick ad old
		ook ake un
		all

direction of word-calling. Learning both consonant sounds and the many sound associations for the various vowels and vowel combinations would place too great a burden on primary students.

Letter-sound associations are taught as they occur in words, not in isolation. The program does provide enough practice for children to demonstrate the usefulness of the decoding skills by application to unknown words resulting in high transfer of skills. The phonics generalizations taught were chosen on the basis of their high utility value as determined by research findings.

The Reading for Meaning Series used the term "word-attack technique" which was changed in the Readers and Reading Series to "decoding strategy". The terminology from linguistics does not seem to have infiltrated the series. The terms "long and short" continued to be used in the latest edition. Perhaps these terms were preferred by teachers rather than the "glided and unglided". "Letter-sound association" was chosen for consistent use rather than the term, "grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

In 1967, Chall concluded that a code-emphasis method, using intensive synthetic decoding produces better results than a meaning-emphasis method using gradual analytic decoding. Proponents of the analytic method contend that it keeps phonics as part of the reading act, since sounds are never isolated and are always taught within context.

It is important in the early readers for the printed language students meet to be an accurate representation of their own oral language. This requires the use of the words, expression and structures that are in common use by children. Table 5 illustrates the earlier introduction of contractions necessary to maintain the natural flow of language.

Throughout all levels, children receive instruction in word parts and on how to use the meanings of word parts to unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words. They also learn to recognize prefixes and suffixes as aids.

Materials at every level were chosen to meet the interest and reading difficulty levels of the children likely to use them. In beginning stages, vocabulary is carefully controlled. Starting with Level J-9, this artificial control is no longer deemed necessary. Although the stories conform to the general reading achievement of children at each of these levels, research shows that the range in knowledge and ability is so wide by fourth grade level that contrived vocabulary manipulation could destroy interest and quality. Variations in vocabulary control and selections throughout the basal readers have led publishing companies to move away from a common vocabulary. Children may find it very difficult to move from one series to a reader published by another company. Earlier instruction in letter-sound associations leads to fewer restrictions on words.

Findings of the First Grade Study showed that pupils become better readers faster if and when new words are presented to them at a considerably faster pace than has been characteristic of basal readers in the past. All new words in the Houghton Mifflin basals are presented in context in order for the students to practice the decoding strategy.

The Readers and Reading Series categorize new words as Basal and Non-basal. Basal words are words that appear often in many kinds of printed matter and are reinforced in each series

through frequent repetition so students will learn to recognize them instantly. Non-basal words are important to certain reading selections but do not occur frequently enough in other printed materials to warrant extensive repetition. No word is considered part of the basal list until it is introduced in a story. Basal words are not listed in the student's texts in the latest revision because reading words in isolation serves no particular useful or realistic purpose.

In the Reading for Meaning Series, a Supplemental Vocabulary listing identified words that children will identify at least once during exposure to materials associated with developing reading skills or providing for individual differences (Section 3 and 4 of each teaching unit).

The authors believe that the words for which students should develop instant recognition (Basal words) are those that occur most frequently in the printed matter they will either want to or be expected to read in the first four grades. A frequency count was made of the base words involved in the American Heritage Word Frequency Study conducted in 1971. The result was a list of 500 base words which had the greatest frequency of occurrence in Grades 3 and 4 reading materials. This list of 500 words accounted for 89.8% of all the running words(800 words accounted for 96%).

Table 6 gives evidence of the increase in the cumulative percent of running words mastered in the Reading Series and compared to the Readers. By Level 3C,D or upon the completion of the preprimers, students should have an instant-recognition that will account for every 50 out of 100 words and by the end of Level H students should have mastery of vocabulary that will account for nearly 90 out of every 100 words they are likely to encounter in third or fourth grade. This sight vocabulary together with the decoding strategy should enable all students to read with relative ease any and all materials they will be called upon to read during the next two years.

It becomes imperative that pupils recognize instantly most if not all of the words in a sentence except the one to be decoded. Otherwise, they would have no context to use as an important clue to the identity of the unknown word. A basal recognition vocabulary of extremely high-frequency words becomes of prime importance in developing independent power in reading. Teachers' criticisms point to the problem of a vocabulary load that builds up too fast for slow learners which would decrease the student's ability to use context clues as an important aid to word identification.

Table 7 presents the cumulative percent of Non-basal words introduced in the Readers and Reading Series at the Primary level. The table shows the percent of the new words introduced

Table 6

Comparison of cumulative percent of running words and recognition mastery of basal words, Readiness through Grade Two

Readers				Reading Series			
Level	No. of Basal Words	Cum. Total	Cum.% of Running Words* (approx.)	Level	No. of Basal Words	Cum. Total	Cum % of Running Words**
2	15	15	25.0	A	16	16	28.2
3A	17	32		B	17	33	32.9
3B	33	65		C	32	65	44.8
3C	31	96	50.0	D	40	105	52.5
4	81	177	66.0	E	133	238	71.1
5	27	204	70.0	F	124	362	80.4
6	198	402		G	94	456	86.4
7	105	507		H	30	486	87.9

Cumulative percent of running words based on
*Kucera-Francis Study, 1967
**The American Heritage Word Frequency Study, 1971

Table 7

The cumulative and percent of non-basal words introduced in Readers and Reading Series, Primary Level

Readers				Reading Series			
Level	Total of Basal and Non-basal Words	No. of Non-basal Words	%	Level	Total of Basal and Non-basal Words	No. of Non-basal Words	%
2	15	-	0	A	16	-	0
3A	24	7	29.2	B	29	12	41.4
3B	54	21	38.9	C	56	24	42.9
3C	51	20	39.2	D	80	40	50.0
4	200	119	59.5	E	206	73	35.4
5	180	153	85.0	F	318	194	61.0
6	398	200	50.3	G	376	282	75.0
7	344	239	69.5	H	436	406	93.1

which must be decoded but are not presented often enough for instant-recognition. At Level H in the Reading Series, 93.1% of the new words are decoded independently without the controlled repetition necessary to become part of the recognition vocabulary for most children. The corresponding level of the Readers require only 69.5% of the new words to be decoded with limited exposure.

Table 8 compares the cumulative total of the basal words for each series in Grades 1-3. The total number of basal words has declined. In the Reading for Meaning Series, the teacher repeated the new words and provided much practice in having the children recognize the word within lists of words. In the latter two editions, the teacher helps the child apply the decoding strategy but does not tell the word.

Table 9 presents the total number of Basal and Non-basal words introduced at each level for the Readers and the Reading Series. It is noted that vocabulary is carefully sontrolled through Level 7-H. The authors state that research has shown that artificial vocabulary control beyond this point is no longer necessary due to the ability of students who have mastered the decoding strategy and are able to use context and dictionary skills to arrive at the pronunciation and meanings of unknown words.

Table 8

Comparisons of Reading for Meaning Series cumulative basal words with Readers and Reading Series, Grades One-Three

Reading for Meaning Series			Readers			Reading Series		
Level	No. of Basal Words	Cum. No.	Level	No. of Basal Words	Cum. No.	Level	No. of Basal Words	Cum. No.
pp1	20	20	3A	32	32	B	33	33
pp2	25	45	3B	33	65	C	32	65
pp3	15	60	3C	31	96	D	40	105
P	113	173	4	81	177	E	133	238
1	155	328	5	27	204	F	124	362
2[1]	208	536	6	198	402	G	94	456
2[2]	206	742	7	105	507	H	30	486
3[1]	339	1081						
3[2]	424	1505						

Table 9

The Readers and Reading Series categorize new vocabulary introduced in reading selections as basal and non-basal

Readers			Reading Series		
Level	No. of Basal Words	No. of Non-basal Words	Level	No. of Basal Words	No. of Non-basal Words
2	15	-	A	16	-
3A	17	7	B	17	12
3B	33	21	C	32	24
3C	31	20	D	40	40
4	81	119	E	133	73
5	27	153	F	124	194
6	198	200	G	94	282
7	105	239	H	30	406
Total:	507	759		486	1031

There is on longer vocabulary control beyond Level 8(Readers)and Level H(Reading Series).

Table 10 provides a listing of the skills categories. A comparison of the Reading for Meaning Series and the Readers/ Reading Series point out the change from general goals to specifically state objectives in a sequential skill development. Each instructional lesson in the Teacher's Guide of the Reading Series is coded to indicate which major and component objective as well as the numerical order of the specific skill is being taught. The location of each skill in the sequential hierarchy is found in the Scope and Sequence Chart of Skills now included in the back of the Teacher's Guides in the latest revision.

Behavioral objectives 1 and 2 (decoding and comprehension) are nearly all introduced and mastered in the primary levels of the program. Objective 3, beginning in Level 8 (Reference and Study Skills) is introduced as they become appropriate and useful. Objective 4 beginning at Level 7 (Literary Appreciation Skills) children discuss the literary nature and merit of the materials they read.

A subcategory under expressional skills involves using punctuation marks as indicators of correct pitch, stress, and juncture. This same ability is listed in the Reading for Meaning Series under "Reading for Meaning". Use of the dictionary to get the correct pronunciation of words is the major component

Table 10

The major skill categories of the Reading for Meaning Series, Readers, and Reading Series

Reading for Meaning Series	Readers/Reading Series
1. Recognizing Words Instant recognition	1. Decoding Skills Word Attack Expressional Pronunciation
2. Teaching Letter Sounds Letter-sound associations	
3. Using Letter Sounds Practice in using previously taught letter-sound associations	2. Comprehension Skills Literal Comprehension Interpretive Thinking Meaning Acquisition
4. Unlocking Strange Words Practice in using context and letter sounds to call to mind familiar spoken words	
5. Listening Development of skills as preparation for parallel reading skills	3. Reference and Study Skills(Level 8+) Information-Locating Information-Appraising Information-Organizing
6. Reading for Comprehension(Level2) Application to reading of skills developed through listening exercises	
7. Reading for Meaning(Level 3+) Use of context and punctuation as aids to getting meaning	4. Literary Appreciation Skills(Level 7+) Classification Element-Identification Quality-Evaluation
8. Reading for Appreciation Teach pupils to recognize and appreciate examples of good writing	
9. Teaching Common Syllables Practice in unlocking strange words by learning to recognize common syllables	

Table 11 provides a description of each section of the teaching unit which consists of 3 basic parts and 1 optional part. The two revisions do not include introducing new words in advance of reading. It is recommended that students be given the opportunity to figure words out independently while reading. Before each reading of each selection, pictures are discussed as an introduction since they contain clues to word identification and concept development. Listening skills are included in each lesson of the Reading for Meaning Series. In the Readers, a planned program of purposeful listening exercises directly parallel the purposes for which children read. The comprehension skills begin on the listening level which provide the foundation for the same skill while reading. Enriching Language Experiences, the final section of every teaching unit in the Readers and Reading Series suggests activities to integrate reading skills with the other language arts.

In response to criticisms of basal readers referring to the endless trivia and details interferring with the enjoyment of reading a selection, the Readers and Reading Series reduce the introduction to the reading and eliminate needless questions on trivia.

In order to develop the ability to handle complex sentences successfully, children are taught at early levels to

Table 11

Sections in each teaching unit

Reading for Meaning Series	Readers/Reading Series
1. Preparing for reading Introduction of new words Establish story background Transition from one story to another Motivation	1. Preparing for reading Introduction to set background Build student interest
2. Reading and discussing Picture reading Silent reading Purpose Practice Develop rapid recognition of basic vocabulary Talking it over Comprehension check Oral reading Workbook assignment Rereading-optional	2. Reading and discussing Picture discussion Silent reading Oral reading and comprehension checks Discussion Includes 3 levels of comprehension Rereading-Optional
3. Developing reading skills Recognizing words Teaching Letter sounds Using Letter sounds Unlocking strange words Listening Reading for Comprehension Reading for Appreciation Teaching Common Syllables Reading for Meaning	3. Teaching reading skills Instruction Practice book Assessment and reassessment tests Application and maintenance Review and practice Reteaching of basic reading skills
4. Providing for individual differences Teacher-participation exercises Seatwork exercises Suggestions for broadening reading	4. Enriching language experiences Integrate reading with language arts activities Reading bonus- extra practice

build and read new sentences and to make sense out of scrambles sentences.

Questions on the literal level predominate in the Reading for Meaning Series. Preliminary listening activities and the development of the higher-level thinking skills provides a firm foundation for the transfer to critical and creatvie reading skills. Discussion questions in the Readers and Reading Series are divided into literal comprehension, interpretive, and evaluative-creative categories. Comprehension questions in the Reading for Meaning Series are not listed according to category. There has been an increase in the interpretive questions and a greater number of evaluative-creative questions asked beginning readers at the preprimer level in the Reading Series. These higher-level thinking skills encourage children to go beyond the story to make judgments and apply the new knowledge gained to their own lives. Direct instruction in critical reading skills begins in Level K-10.

The increasing quantities of printed matter together with the increasing complexity of our society make it essential that adults critically analyze what they read. Children are capable as beginning readers of evaluating what they read so that they do not grow up believing that everything they read in print must be true.

Setting purposes for reading by pre- and post-questioning techniques encourages flexible reading. Children must be asked questions on all levels of comprehension in order to vary their purposes for reading.

Research has shown that students show the greatest gains in reading if their progress is evaluated continually. A change that resulted from the scientific study of reading was the recognition of the possibility of measuring a much greater variety of reading abilities. Increased emphasis has recently been placed on continual diagnosis, criterion-referenced measures, goal-referenced evaluation, and mastery learning.

Rather than end-of-the-year testing which results in ranking students rather than assessing learning, there is now more emphasis on continual psycholinguistic analysis of children's reading performance. The Pupil Placement Test developed by Hollander and Reisman is an oral test by which the teacher analyzes miscues to determine strengths and weaknesses.

The trend in measurement has led to the development of speficifically stated objectives in behavioral terms and the requirements of performance mastery. Precise diagnostic and evaluative instruments facilitate grouping and keeps teachers aware of how each pupil puts his skills to use. For pupils with particular needs or weaknesses, alternate instructional and reinforcing materials are provided.

Table 12 reveals that the testing instruments have been increased and refined. Since there are numerous tests available, there may be a tendency to spend too much time for administration. The authors therefore recommend teacher observations of the child's performance on a daily basis during group lessons and on the practice materials as an informal assessment of ability. Teachers are also advised to compare actual classroom performance with test results to determine if skills are being applied effectively.

To determine placement within the program, each child is administered an appropriate Informal Reading Inventory or Pupil Placement Test. The new Houghton Mifflin IRI is composed of basal reader selections which would be more accurate for placement than one based on other materials.

Diagnostic tests are used to pinpoint difficulties of students who do not perform satisfactorily on the survey tests. Tests of Basic Reading Skills are criterion-referenced tests of specific skills taught. These tests are located at the end of each section of the book or level. In the latest edition, individual standardized test scores are compared to a critical score. The developers state that if the learner scores at or above the 80% criterion level, and if their classwork is consistent with the scores, they can proceed to the next level. A Class Record Form is available to compare individual student's performance and to identify those areas in which a number of students may

Table 12

Evaluation Instruments

Reading for Meaning Series	Readers	Reading Series
Diagnostic Instruments		
1. The McKee Inventory of Phonetic Skills Test One-Three	1. Phonics Inventory Assess mastery of letter-sound associations taught at Levels 3-9	1. Phonics Inventory Tests Assessess student control of letter-sound associations taught
2. A Pre-reading Inventory of Skills Basic to Beginning Reading Levels tests(Special tests available in ungraded primary organization		2. An Inventory of Pre-Reading Skills Use after Level A a. survey b. diagnostic
Maintenance Tests Basic Reading Test Specific measurement of skills developed at each level	The Basic Reading Tests Diagnostic achievement tests for Levels 2-12 Evaluate mastery of skills appropriate at each level	Tests of Basic Reading Skills- for levels B-M Criterion-referenced testing program
Standardized Group Tests The Primary Reading Profiles Level I-after first reader Level II- after 2[2]reader	Pupil Placement Tests (Not based on Houghton Mifflin materials) word recognition oral and silent reading	Pupil Placement Test Houghton Mifflin Informal Reading Inventory **Assessment Tests** (Levels A-H) Pre-, Post-, and Re-

need further instruction and practice.

Diagnostic testing, based on stated objectives of the program, is a built-in component of the 6-step procedure suggested for teaching each basic reading skill. Since skills are clearly defined and instructional procedures are thorough, skills are taught and retaught rather than only tested. With the pre- and post-assessment components, the emphasis is on teaching only what the individual child needs to learn.

Throughout the series, reading skills are not viewed as ends in themselves. Provision must be made for practice and application of these skills in all their reading in addition to continual assessment and adjustment to the program to meet each child's particular learning style.

The Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company has produced two major revisions of its basal reading series since the Houghton Mifflin Reading for Meaning Series published in 1966. The second revision occurred in 1976 with the publication of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series (second edition, 1979). For the purposes of this study, the first nine books in each series for Grades 1-3 were examined and comparisons made. The areas in which any changes or innovations occurred and their significance in light of existing trends and current research formed the basis for this analysis.

Although the basic philosophy and goals of the reading program have not changed substantially over the past two decades, the substantial research in the field of reading has contributed to changes in both revisions.

An analysis of the guiding principles underlying the preparation of the reading materials must take into account the influence of the research in linguistics. Sentence patterns are carefully controlled to provide a match between spoken and printed language. The sentence, not the individual word, is the unit of meaning. Children must build a command of grammatical relationships as well as of vocabulary as prerequisites for reading. Letter-sound associations are taught as they occur in words and are never isolated. All new words are introduced in

context. Since isolating words is of little value, word lists have been eliminated from the children's readers in the most recent revision. Pitch, stress and juncture are important ingredients of meaning.

A fundamental change in the Houghton Mifflin Readers has been the replacement of grade designations for numerical levels in order to provide a better match between the child and the materials with which he can operate most comfortably.

Decoding skills are taught initially utilizing a decoding strategy involving consonant letter-sound associations in combination with context. Children are instructed in the use of the fewest cues necessary for correct identification of words which are unfamiliar only in the printed form. There has been an earlier emphasis on these letter-sound associations. For example, direct teaching of long and short vowel sound associations is now included in the traditional first grade rather than second grade level in the last two revisions. By the end of the second grade, all letter-sound associations are introduced and mastered before proceeding to the next level. A change in terminology from "word-attack technique" to "decoding strategy" took place in the 1971 edition.

Changes in the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series have also been significant. Level designations have been changed from

numerical to alphabetical in order to show movement through the preprimer levels as opposed to all preprimers being all at one level.

The last two revisions of the reading series have reflected a new movement created by the political and cultural atmosphere of the 1960's toward a more realistic and equitable representation of minority groups, urban living, and a wider span of socio-economic levels. The content and illustrations were chosen to represent and appeal to all children. This is a departure from the white, middle-class, family-oriented format of the Reading for Meaning Series of the 1960's.

More than half the selections have been changed by the addition of a greater variety of literary styles including imaginary stories, folk tales, biographies, jokes and riddles, poetry, and informational selections. Illustrations have become more appealing through the use of brighter colors and a variety of different art styles from primitive to modern.

Questions asked to guide and assess comprehension of the selections read have been divided into categories based on the level of comprehension involved. Interpretive and evaluative-creative categories have been added to the predominantly literal types of questions asked in the Reading for Meaning Series. There is an equal number of questions in each category beginning in the preprimer levels. The higher-level thinking skills upon

which critical and creative reading skills are based are thereby fostered from the first experiences with print.

Due to the early introduction of the decoding strategy (letter-sound associations and context), there has been an increase in the number of non-basal words introduced since the child should be able to decode these words independently. However, mastery is expected only of the basal words which have steadily decreased over the past two decades.

There has also been earlier instruction in reference and study skills and application to content-related materials. Informational selections are included at beginning levels. The change from "learning-to-read"to"reading-to-learn" has occurred at the traditional third grade level rather than fourth as in the Reading for Meaning Series. Third grade is now considered part of the intermediate rather than the primary level. Additional emphasis is placed on study skills and application to expository materials at this level.

Allowances for individual differences in ability are made through the use of alternate instructional and reinforcing materials. A greater variety of testing materials available make it possible to assess each child's mastery of skills and pinpoint weaknesses, thus aiding in appropriate pacing of pupils at their own rate. Objectives are fixed in that all learners are

expected to achieve all the objectives. However, there is flexibility in that learners are not expected to achieve the same objectives at the same time. Self-correcting materials are also available for independent study.

The authors state that the selections are important primarily as vehicles for teaching the skills, and therefore acceleration in the basal reading program has little value. The important consideration is to develop the skills with care--then provide an equal amount of time with a wide variety of reading materials for these skills to be applied enjoyably in an independent reading program. Time should also be allotted to share the enjoyment and knowledge gained with fellow students. This self-selection of reading materials is an important aspect of an individualized program. The Reading for Meaning Series suggested teacher-pupil exercises found in Section 4 thereby incorporating another aspect of the individualized reading program.

The interrelatedness of all the language arts is illustrated in the Enriching Language Activities secion of every teaching unit which teachers are strongly encouraged to utilize.

Demonstrating the usefulness of reading is an important aspect of the reading program and one which can lead to increased motivation. Independence in word identification is felt through the early mastery of the decoding strategy. Reading as

a functional skill and not as isolated exercises is experienced as a result of the profitable use of reading skills in the content areas and as part of the language arts program involving expressive and receptive communication skills. The importance of listening is stressed as readiness for skills at all levels. Initially comprehension skills, such as finding the main idea, are introduced at the listening level as a foundation for the same skill employed during reading.

The responsibility for learning in this program rests on each child. This active role involves interpreting pictures, making generalizations concerning vowel sound associations from phonograms, learning consonant letter-sound associations inductively, and answering comprehension questions which involve thought rather than finding the answer verbatim. The child is never told what a word is or what sound a letter represents. Only analytic phonics is utilized.

Some slower children may not be able to form generalizations, particularly since these generalizations are initially unverbalized. Some children may fail to discriminate the sound within a word and may be able to learn it best in isolation.

As psycholinguists become increasingly knowledgeable about both reading acquisition and current practices in reading instruction, they become more certain that a child learns to

read as he learns to speak, more from his own process of acquisition than from what he is taught directly. If this is an accurate hypothesis, then it follows that all the ways that have been successful in teaching children to read should be considered as possible contributors to the total instructional program. Research has shown that the average and below average students derive greater benefit from a synthetic rather than an analytic approach. Therefore, this approach may help some children to learn letter-sound associations more successfully and should be incorporated into the instructional framework.

When children are reading, they are told to think how the words would sound if they were spoken. Stress on intonation, pitch, and juncture requires that the children say the words to themselves while reading silently. Since this may lead to subvocalization during silent reading, it may interfere with the translation of print directly into meaning.

In conclusion, the latest edition of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series is a total instructional reading program encompassing 15 levels from Readiness through Jr. High. The essential materials include readers, Teachers' Guides, and practice books. A great many ancillary materials are available including testing instruments, management tools, and programed lessons for slow learners for use by paraprofessionals. The inclusion of multimedia

instructional aids contribute to its overall plan.

The ultimate aim of reading instruction is to provide for consistent growth through the matching of instruction to each child's needs by the appropriate selection and adaptation of materials. The major goal of the program from the beginning is to have each child reading independently with comprehension and interest.

The most frequent criticism voiced by teachers who filled out questionnaires on the use of the last revision was that the Reading Series was too difficult for the average and slow learners. Suggestions for changes included more repetition of basal vocabulary, more materials to help pupils with reading difficulties and supplemental books where readability factors are controlled at the third and fourth grade levels. The major criticism of the Readers(1971) focused on the number of skills introduced in each lesson and the high readability levels. The publishers responded to the concerns of the consumer by lowering the readability and streamlining the skills presentation for each lesson in the subsequent revision.

The authors feel that a reading series that is comprehensive in skill development should provide growth in reading skills for all learners. They feel that teachers who still equate levels to the completion of one or more books a year will

find the slow to average student unable to cope with the skills or vocabulary. The concept of children progressing at their own pace should be kept in mind. The learning routes of children may vary depending on performance on assessment materials. Re-teaching and reassessment are part of each skills lesson. Stu-ents who demonstrate a need for additional instruction and practice receive both through the availability of supporting materials. Branching activities are supplied in the Enriching Language Experiences.

The comprehensiveness of the Scope and Sequence Chart included in the latest revision of the Teachers' Guide allows the teacher to be continually aware of which major objective, component, and specific skills the learner is working on. The approach to instruction outlined in the flow chart of the Teaching Reading Skills section of each teaching unit routinely allows for reteaching and reassessment as an integral part of the lesson. Student practice books for skills are correlated exactly to the point of initial instruction on a new skill.

In the area of comprehension, more time and consideration needs to be given to finding out how students located the correct answer to the literal questions, and the thought processes which led to the interpretive and evaluative-creative responses.

At the traditional grade three level where vocabulary

control no longer exists, vocabulary whose meaning and/or pronunciation is unknown might only be identified once or the children are advised to look the word up in the glossary or dictionary. Since practice is a requirement for permanent retention, some of the average and below average children might have inadequate reading vocabularies due to limited exposure which could lead to comprehension problems.

If children are to develop a lively interest in reading, they must not be bogged down by a strict daily routine of skill development and the same pattern of steps in oral and silent reading. It is up to the teacher to use the suggested enrichment activities and to relate reading to other areas of the curriculum.

The selections at the primary level were chosen according to interest appeal and literary merit. Unfortunately, due to the choice of high interest stories, interruptions may prove frustrating to the students who become engrossed in the story and do not want to stop and wait for the next episode or the conclusion of the story. As Staiger(1969) pointed out, "Readers proceed under the harrassment of continual interruptions by the teacher's questions and directions". The effect may be to diminish interest in subsequent stories.

For the bright average and above average students, this series has demonstrated results, based on teachers' opinions,

in keeping with the goals of the program--that of independence and an ever-widening interest in reading. With the slow and average students, the teacher needs to move more slowly, providing more repetition, and to utilize more of the reteaching and practice materials.

To achieve success in working effectively in any program, both teachers and administrators must be thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy, goals, instructional strategies and materials involved in the program. If a school system has decided to use the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series, consultant services should be utilized as part of an in-service program to meet the above requirements and implement the program.

At present, there is a further need for coordinated laboratory as well as extensive longitudinal studies resulting in more definitive answers concerning the most effective use of materials now available. Further research into the development of alternate patterns of steps in a typical teaching unit lesson would also aid in reducing boredom and routine.

It is only through constant attention and effort that teachers can assist publishers by keeping them informed of the results of their daily classroom experiences with a variety of materials to improve reading instruction for children of varying capacities and interests.

Reading systems require a balance of research, supervisory capabilities and ongoing input from classroom teachers to evolve into the kind of sound programs that can provide the degree of instruction, interest, and motivation that will instill in all young readers the ability to think with print and the commitment of a lifetime habit.

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